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not insensible of short-comings, but they will yet venture to say that this retrospect of the past does inspire them with a hope for the future."

The first two names appended to this report are those of the brothers Henry and John Lawrence, — the dead and the living.

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ART. II. — 1. *The Life and Times of Sir Philip Sidney.*

Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1859. 16mo. pp. 281.

2. LORD BROOK'S *Life of Sir Philip Sidney.* With a Preface, etc., by SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, Bart., K. J. Kent: Printed at the Private Press of Lee Priory, by Johnson and Warwick. 1816. 2 vols. Royal 8vo. pp. 145, 146.

3. *The Miscellaneous Works of SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, Knt.* With a Life of the Author and Illustrative Notes by WILLIAM GRAY, Esq., of Magdalen College and the Inner Temple. Oxford: D. A. Talboys. 1829. Post 8vo. pp. 398.

4. *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia.* Written by SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, Knight. Now the Sixt Time Pvblished. London: Imprinted by H. L. for Simon Waterson and Mathew Lownes. 1622. 4to. pp. 588.

MUCH has been written in illustration of the Elizabethan age. Yet the theme has lost none its attractiveness; and each new attempt to portray the character of the great Protestant Queen, or to make us more familiar with the eminent statesmen who adorned her court, and the no less eminent writers who successively arose during her reign, is sure to be favorably received. Her reign, indeed, forms a conspicuous era in the political and religious history of England. By her strong and energetic will Protestantism was firmly established, and England waged successful war against the greatest of the Catholic monarchs. Under her imperial sway literature and the arts flourished, a spirit of adventure was rife, and important maritime enterprises were undertaken. There was also in the personal characters of the men then prominently upon the stage much to attract the student and to excite an

interest in their personal fortunes, apart from the interest felt in them by virtue of their connection with the state. They were men of no ordinary mark; and the circumstances of the times were such as to call for the exercise of all their powers. The re-establishment of Protestantism in the place of Romanism, the strengthening of the throne against the dangers arising from a disputed succession, the prosecution of a foreign war, the suppression of domestic violence, and the disentanglement of domestic intrigues, were among the labors which Elizabeth and her advisers had to encounter; and these all involved questions which demanded a large and far-sighted statesmanship for their solution. Nor was it in politics alone that the men of that epoch found an ample field for vigorous exertion. Various causes had contributed to give a strong impulse to intellectual pursuits, and much of the activity of the age found expression in prose and verse. In not a few instances the same persons became famous for their achievements in both directions, and united the renown of a soldier or a statesman with that of a poet or a scholar.

Among the men who wore this double crown with distinguished grace Sir Philip Sidney holds the first rank. His contemporaries regarded him with an admiration which it is difficult now to understand; and this feeling was not confined to his own countrymen, but was largely shared by other nations. Dying at the early age of thirty-two, he left a reputation for intellectual wealth, for personal courage and all knightly qualities, and for wisdom in counsel, which few men have been able to build up in a long life. Even down to the middle of the last century his works continued to be read with delight, and to be frequently reprinted. But since that time his reputation as a writer has sensibly declined, and the number of persons at the present day who are familiar with his works must be very small. His personal character, however, is held in scarcely less admiration now than at any previous period. His name is still one of the most brilliant in English history, and even the contemporary estimate of his virtues is accepted with but little qualification.

It is to this admiration for his character, rather than to any especial interest in his writings, that we owe the prepara-

tion of the volume named first at the commencement of this article. The author, who is understood to be a lady of New York, has accordingly labored to bring into prominent relief his most attractive personal qualities, and has dedicated the volume to her son as a "memorial of one whose name is a synonyme for every manly virtue, and whose example, surpassing the standard of the age which it adorned, remains still brilliant when centuries have passed away." Her knowledge of the subject is ample ; she has had access to the best sources of information ; and she has enriched her narrative by many well-chosen citations from previous biographers and from Sidney's own writings. Her most obvious faults are a somewhat ambitious and swollen style, and a too uniform strain of panegyric. There is, besides, some confusion in the details by which she attempts to illustrate Sidney's times. But, with these qualifications, her work is an interesting sketch, and is well adapted to its purpose. Nor should we omit to speak with high commendation of her excellent analyses of Sidney's writings. They are sufficiently full and minute to give her readers a very fair idea of most of his works, and have evidently been prepared with much care.

The very rare and valuable *Life of Sidney* by Lord Brooke is the original authority for many of the well-known incidents narrated by subsequent biographers. It is the production of a companion and ardent friend of Sidney, who viewed all his actions through the colored medium of a strong personal attachment, and its delineation of his character must be received with caution, but its statement of facts is entitled to full credit. Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, was the son of a Warwickshire knight, and was born about 1554, — the same year in which Sidney first saw the light. He was carried to court at an early age, and there experienced the various fortunes which awaited the courtiers of Elizabeth, being alternately in favor and in disgrace. Yet he represented his native county in Parliament, and held several important places during her reign ; and at her death he was Treasurer of the Navy. In the succeeding reign he still continued in favor, and in 1620 he was raised to the peerage. Early in the reign of Charles I. he founded a Professorship of His-

tory at Cambridge; and during his whole life he appears to have shared the literary tastes of his friend. His death occurred in September, 1628, from the effect of a wound received from one of his servants.\* Besides the *Life of Sidney*, which was published posthumously, he wrote several tragedies, essays, and poems. Some of these minor productions were also published after his death; but they are strongly marked by the faults of the age, and are now very little known. His *Life of Sidney* is an interesting memoir, and shows considerable mental power in the writer. A *Life of Elizabeth* was also planned by him, but it was never completed, in consequence of the refusal of the Earl of Salisbury, who was Secretary in the reign of her successor, to permit him to make an examination of the state papers.

The volume edited by Mr. Gray contains all of the works commonly ascribed to Sidney, except the Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*, and the metrical version of the *Psalms of David*, which last was partly composed by his sister. It also comprises a small and valuable collection of his letters, and is enriched by several illustrative notes. The *Memoir* is short and well-written; but it has the same defects which characterize the two works already mentioned, and is marked by an extravagant tone of eulogy. There were elements enough of real excellence in the personal character of Sidney to excite a well-grounded admiration; and the writer who attempts to gloze over his faults, and to deny the licentious character of his amatory verse, only weakens the lessons which his life is suited to teach. Yet Mr. Gray "cannot perceive any of that shocking sensuality" in *Astrophel and Stella* which Mr. Godwin justly condemns, and thinks that "the unhappy course of their loves, and the notoriously brutal character of Lord Rich, may be received as some excuse, if not as a perfect justification, of the passionate, yet rarely indecorous, regard which Sidney continued to express in his verses for the object of his earliest and most vehement attachment." To

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\* Lord Brooke and Sidney were distantly related, ancestors of both having married into the family of Lord Beauchamp. In the epitaph on his monument at Warwick, Lord Brooke describes himself as "Servant to Queen Elizabeth, Counsellor to King James, and Friend to Sir Philip Sidney."

such weak excuses do biographers descend, rather than acknowledge the existence of any faults or vices in their heroes.

The family of Sidney was of French origin, and traced its history back to the twelfth century, when Sir William Sidney came over from Anjou with Henry II., to whose service he was attached as knight chamberlain. His descendants do not appear to have continued at court, and it is not until the time of Henry VIII. that the family again emerges into notice. In the reign of that monarch, and of his successor, Edward VI., another Sir William Sidney basked in the royal favor, and was rewarded by Edward with the gift of Penshurst Castle. At his death he left one son, Henry Sidney, who carried the family name to a much higher renown than it had before attained. Born in 1529, this eminent statesman held office under Edward VI., by whom he was appointed ambassador to France; and after the death of that amiable prince he had the good fortune to enjoy the favor of both Mary and Elizabeth. By the latter he was made Lord President of Wales, an office which he held for more than twenty years; and he was also three times named Lord Deputy of Ireland.\* In the administration of the affairs of this unfortunate country he was not successful; and in 1578 he was ordered to resign his government, in consequence of the bitter complaints of the English of the pale. Mr. Hallam, indeed, does not hesitate to stigmatize his conduct as "an attempt to subvert their liberties"; and it seems clear that the complaints were not unfounded. But he did not lose the Queen's favor, and he was finally acquitted from all the charges brought against him. At an early age he married Lady Mary Dudley, eldest daughter of the Duke of Northumberland, by whom he had three sons and one daughter, the famous Countess of Pembroke. Lady Sidney is described by Lord Brooke as "by nature of a large, ingenious spirit"; but "the mischance of sickness having cast a veil over her excellent beauty," she did not court public observation, and

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\* He seems to have declined the last appointment, which was offered to him in 1582, either in consequence of the Queen's refusal to give his son the reversion of the office, or because the younger Sidney was unwilling to reside in Ireland.

spent most of her time in the seclusion of private life. It was probably from his mother that Philip Sidney inherited the more amiable traits of his character; and from his father he undoubtedly derived his enterprising spirit and his fondness for public life.

He was their eldest son, and was born at Penshurst Castle, in the western part of the beautiful and fertile county of Kent, on the 29th of November, 1554, the same month in which Romanism was re-established in England. His name, we are told, was given him as a well-timed compliment to Philip II. of Spain, whom Mary had recently married; but it does not appear that his father felt any special affection for the old religion, or looked with special favor upon the hated Spanish marriage. Of his youth little is known except the fact that he was reputed to be grave and thoughtful beyond his years, so that his father called him, in the pedantic phraseology of the age, *lumen familiæ suæ*. His childhood was probably passed partly at Penshurst and partly in London, where, according to Mr. Peter Cunningham, his grandfather and his father successively occupied a house in Threadneedle Street, belonging to the collegiate church of St. George, Windsor. At an early age he was sent to the grammar school at Shrewsbury, in order to be near his father, who had taken up his residence in Ludlow Castle, upon receiving the appointment of President of the Principality of Wales. Here the boy made rapid progress in his studies; and a letter from Sir Henry Sidney is extant, acknowledging the receipt of two letters, written when Philip was only twelve years old, one in Latin and the other in French.

When he was fourteen, he was transferred to Christ Church College, Oxford; and, according to all his recent biographers, he afterwards studied at Cambridge.\* At Oxford, his studies were pursued under the immediate eye of the Reverend Dr.

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\* The circumstance of his studying at both Universities is not mentioned by his early biographers; and Anthony Wood says expressly that he continued at Oxford until he went upon the Continent. Dr. Zouch, who published an elaborate Life of Sidney in 1808, from which subsequent writers have drawn largely, mentions a residence both at Oxford and at Cambridge, but without quoting any authority for the statement.

Thornton, an amiable and accomplished scholar, who was so proud of his pupil's renown, that he caused the fact of his having been "the tutor of Sir Philip Sidney" to be recorded upon his tomb. The course of Sidney's collegiate study was broad and symmetrical, taking in the whole range of literature and science; and his rapid and brilliant progress attracted especial notice. Entering into the perusal of the classics with the ardor which characterized that age, he early became familiar with Greek and Latin, and his taste for the modern languages was equally marked. About the time he entered the University, negotiations were carried on for his marriage, at a future period, with Anne Cecil, daughter of Lord Burleigh; but for some reason the marriage was given up, and the lady subsequently became the wife of the Earl of Oxford, afterward the personal enemy of Sidney.\*

As heir apparent to his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, a brilliant future was opened for Sidney, when he left the University; and, anxious to be furnished at all points, he determined to accompany the Earl of Lincoln upon his embassy to France. Accordingly, in May, 1572, he received permission from Queen Elizabeth "for her trusty and well-beloved Philip Sidney, Esquire, to go out of England, into parts beyond the seas, with three servants and four horses; to remain during two years, for his attaining the knowledge of foreign languages." While in Paris he attracted the notice and favor of Charles IX., who appointed him one of the gentlemen of his bedchamber. But a fortnight after receiving this dangerous honor Sidney gladly withdrew from the court of that cruel and treacherous monarch, and sought refuge from the horrors of St. Bartholomew in the house of Sir Francis Walsingham, at that time the Queen's resident minister at the court of France, to whose friendly offices his uncle had previously recommended him. "He is young and raw," so Lei-

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\* Lord Burleigh, at that time known as Sir William Cecil, seems to have shown the first inclination to break off the match. In a letter dated February 24, 1569, Sir Henry Sidney writes: "For my part, I never was more ready to perfect that matter than presently I am; assuring you for my part, if I might have the greatest prince's daughter in Christendom for him, the match spoken of between us on my part should not be broken."



cester wrote, "and no doubt shall find those countries, and the demeanors of the people, somewhat strange unto him; in which respect your good advice and counsel shall greatly behove him for his better directions, which I do most heartily pray you to vouchsafe him, with any other friendly assistance you shall think needful for him." Sidney spent but a short time under the roof of his future father-in-law; and soon after the massacre he left Paris, in company with the Dean of Winchester, passing through Strasburg and Heidelberg, to Frankfort, where he spent several months in the house of Andrew Wechel, a learned printer, and a man of considerable reputation in that age. Here he made the acquaintance of Hubert Languet, a distinguished Protestant scholar, and the reputed author of a somewhat celebrated Latin treatise against tyrants, who had fled from France in consequence of the religious persecutions. Languet was many years his senior; but similarity of tastes produced a close friendship, which was terminated only by death, and for several years they kept up a familiar correspondence. To this eminent man the young scholar was indebted for much valuable advice; and it cannot be doubted that Languet's influence over Sidney, at this early period of his life, was highly beneficial.

From Frankfort the young traveller went in the following spring to Vienna, where he spent some time in company with the brother of Sir Henry Wotton, perfecting himself in horsemanship, fencing, and other manly accomplishments; and then, turning his steps southward, he successively visited Venice and Padua. In each of these cities he spent several months, prosecuting his studies with zeal and success, and devoting himself especially to the study of astronomy, geometry, and the classical and modern languages. "I intend to follow your advice about composition thus," he writes to Languet from Padua: "I shall first take one of Cicero's letters and turn it into French; then from French into English, and so once more by a sort of perpetual motion it shall come round into Latin again. Perhaps too I shall improve myself in Italian by the same exercise." In a subsequent letter from the same place he tells his friend: "Of the German language, my dear Hubert, I absolutely despair. It has a sort

of harshness, (you know very well what I mean,) so that, at my age, I have no hope that I shall ever master it, even so as to understand it." In the same letter he gives his correspondent a noticeable insight into his character at this period. "I readily allow," he says, "that I am often more serious than either my age or my pursuits demand; yet this I have learned by experience, that I am never less a prey to melancholy than when I am earnestly applying the feeble powers of my mind to some high and difficult object." From Northern Italy it was his intention to proceed to Rome; but he was dissuaded from this purpose by Languet, who feared that his principles were not yet settled upon a sufficiently firm basis to resist the seductions of the papal city, and that he might fall a victim to the attempt to convert him to Romanism. To this advice Sidney yielded, though he afterward expressed his regret at not having persevered in his original intention. He retraced his steps slowly through Germany and Holland, returning to England in the early part of 1575.

Shortly after his return, negotiations were opened for his marriage with the Lady Penelope Devereux, the frail and beautiful sister of the Earl of Essex. Sidney's affections appear to have been deeply engaged, and he afterward celebrated her charms under the name of Stella in his Sonnets, and under that of Philoclea in the Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*; but this second marriage scheme was soon abandoned, under circumstances which were not deemed creditable at the time. "Truly, I must say," Sir Edward Waterhouse wrote to Sidney's father, "as I have said to my Lord of Leicester, and Mr. Philip, the breaking off from this match, if the default be on your parts, will turn to more dishonor than can be repaired with any other marriage in England." Nevertheless, the obloquy was encountered; and not long afterward Lady Devereux married Robert, the third Lord Rich. Her wedded life was unhappy, and she never exhibited any affection for her husband, whom she had married with undisguised aversion. They were at length divorced; and after her brother's death she espoused the Earl of Devonshire, who had been Sidney's rival while she was the wife of Lord Rich. Her second husband was of too sensitive a nature to endure the opprobrium

which attached to his marriage, and after a few months he died of shame and mortification. His widow followed him to the grave within a year.\*

It was probably about the time when the negotiations for his marriage were in progress that Sidney began his public career. His first official appointment was of a diplomatic character, as ambassador extraordinary to the imperial court, upon the death of the Emperor Maximilian II. The ostensible purpose of his mission was to condole with Maximilian's son and successor, Rodolph II.; but its real objects were to ascertain what were the political sentiments of the new Emperor and the German princes, and to watch over the general interests of Protestantism. This delicate trust he discharged with much adroitness, showing a diplomatic skill and discretion not often found in so young a person. "There hath not been any gentleman, I am sure," says Secretary Walsingham in a letter to Leicester, "these many years, that hath gone through so honorable a charge with as great commendations as he." While he was in Germany, he not only visited the imperial court, but he also opened communications with several of the electoral princes; and, in pursuance of his instructions, he made inquiry in regard to the Emperor's disposition, the state of his revenues, the probability of his marrying, his relations with his brothers, the persons by whom he was advised, and also in regard to the sentiments of the Emperor's brothers and the extent of their political influence. The results of these inquiries are embodied in an interesting and instructive letter to Secretary Walsingham, printed in Mr. Gray's volume. Upon his return through the Netherlands, in 1577, Sidney made the acquaintance of the Prince of Orange, upon whom he produced a very favorable impression, which led to a

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\* Mr. Craik has brought together much curious and interesting information about Lady Rich, in the first volume of "The Romance of the Peerage," and has also given numerous extracts from *Astrophel and Stella*, with a very judicious commentary. He inclines to the opinion that the sonnets and poems under that title were written after Sidney's marriage, and not long before his death. But this is by no means certain. There was undoubtedly a considerable interval between the earliest and the latest sonnets, but it does not seem probable that they cover so much time as is implied by the supposition that some were written "little more than a twelvemonth before Sidney's death."

friendly correspondence. When Lord Brooke met William at Delft, some years later, that wise and thoughtful prince bore cordial testimony to Sidney's rich promise.

"With himself," says Lord Brooke, "he began *ab ovo*, as having been of Charles the Fifth's privy council before he was one-and-twenty years of age; and since, as the world knew, either an actor or at least acquainted with the greatest actors and affairs of Europe; and likewise with her greatest men and ministers of estate. In all which series of time, multitude of things and persons, he protested unto me (and for her service), that if he could judge, her Majesty had one of the ripest and greatest counsellors of estate in Sir Philip Sidney that this day lived in Europe."

Upon Don John of Austria, whom Sidney also met about the same time, he seems to have left a similar impression; and it was with a high Continental reputation that he returned to England.

In the course of the next year Sidney made his first appearance as an author, being then in his twenty-fourth year. His uncle, the Earl of Leicester, had invited the Queen to spend a few days at the princely seat of Wanstead House, that he might, by fresh evidences of devoted loyalty, strengthen his ascendancy over her mind; and to add to her pleasure Sidney wrote a masque, entitled "The Lady of May." The piece is short; it is marked by the fantastic conceits of the age, and is sufficiently adulatory in its tone to gratify the most courtly taste. While her Majesty was walking in the garden, attended by her courtiers, she was suddenly accosted by a woman dressed in rustic apparel, who besought the royal interposition to decide between the rival suitors of her daughter, the Lady of May, who was unable to decide for herself. She then placed in the Queen's hands some complimentary verses, and withdrew, but only to give place to a noisy throng of shepherds and foresters escorting her daughter, the rival suitors, and their friends and supporters. An animated contest in verse then ensued between the two rivals, Therion the forester, and Espilus the shepherd, interspersed with prolix speeches from a pedantic schoolmaster, and remarks from the other characters. At last her Majesty pronounced the desired decision; and the Lady of May

closed the play with an adulatory address to the Queen. The merits of the piece, as we have intimated, are small, but it is deserving of notice as the first production of Sidney's pen, and as a characteristic specimen of the servile compositions by which Elizabeth's vanity was flattered.

About the same time Sidney took an active part in a much more serious business, the defence of his father from the charges brought against him for misgovernment in Ireland. Into this defence he entered with the impetuosity which forms a marked blemish on his character. Thus, in a letter to his father's secretary, who rested under the suspicion of having betrayed the Lord Deputy to his enemies, he writes :—

“ Few words are best. My letters to my father have come to the eyes of some. Neither can I condemn any but you for it. If so, you have played the very knave with me ; and so I will make you know if I have good proof of it. But that for so much as is past. For that is to come, I assure you, before God, that if ever I know you to do so much as read any letter I write to my father, without his commandment or my consent, I will thrust my dagger into you.”

The same vehement spirit involved him in a quarrel with the Earl of Ormond, whom he also accused of treachery ; but through the interference of their friends, the breach was healed before any evil results had occurred. His father's heart, however, seems to have been sensibly touched by the son's eagerness and warmth ; and in a letter written about this time to his second son, who was then travelling on the Continent, he says : “ Imitate Philip's virtues, exercises, studies, and actions : he is a rare ornament of his age, the very formular that all well-disposed young men of our court do form also their manners and life by. In truth, I speak it without flattery of him or myself, he hath the most virtues that ever I found in any man.”

For the next year or two Sidney's name does not appear in connection with public affairs ; but in 1579 he wrote his celebrated letter to Queen Elizabeth, dissuading her from marrying the Duke of Anjou, youngest son of Catherine de Medici.\* This letter, which has been much and deservedly

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\* Hume, who is notoriously careless and inaccurate, places his abstract of this letter under date of 1581. Other writers assign its composition to the year 1580. But for several reasons we are inclined to place it in the latter half of 1579.

praised, undoubtedly exercised considerable influence over the Queen's mind in determining her subsequent course ; for it is the glory of Elizabeth's character, that she never allowed her personal wishes to interfere with the interests of her country. With much clearness and force of reasoning, Sidney maintained that the only sure support of her government was the affection of her Protestant subjects, and that this would be endangered by her marriage with a Catholic prince ; that the Catholics were the natural enemies of her throne, and needed only a powerful head to become formidable ; that the turbulent and ambitious character of Anjou was suited to inspire a fear lest he should place himself at their head, in which case he would probably be seconded by the French king, his brother ; that the marriage of Mary with Philip II. did not afford a precedent for the proposed marriage, since they were of the same religion, and France was a check upon any ambitious designs which Philip might form ; that there were no advantages to be anticipated from a marriage with the French prince, which might not be anticipated from any other marriage, while there were peculiar evils and dangers connected with it ; and that, even if she were to die childless, her fame would be secure.

“Let such particular actions,” he says, in conclusion, “be found out (which be easy, as I think, to be done) by which you may gratify all the hearts of the people: let those in whom you find trust, and to whom you have committed trust, in your mighty affairs, be held up in the eyes of your subjects: lastly, doing as you do, you shall be, as you be, the example of princes, the ornament of this age, the comfort of the afflicted, the delight of your people, the most excellent fruit of your progenitors, and the perfect mirror of your posterity.”

Though the advice was probably at first unpalatable to the Queen, she does not appear to have been offended by it ; and it was certainly such as was most consonant with her own dignity and the interests of the country. It is perhaps the most important, if not the most agreeable, service which Sidney ever rendered to his royal mistress ; and though he may have been in some degree influenced by family considerations, the service was none the less real and substantial.

The zeal which Sidney manifested against the marriage was

probably a chief cause of his quarrel with the Earl of Oxford, one of the leaders of the opposing faction. To this quarrel Sidney's biographers have attached much and deserved importance, since it gives us considerable insight into his character, while, by leading to his temporary withdrawal from court, it afforded him the leisure which he occupied in writing the Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*. The circumstances, as related by Lord Brooke, are briefly these. One day while Sidney was at play in the tennis-court, within sight of the Queen's windows, the haughty Earl came into the court, and in a supercilious tone gave some directions with which Sidney declined to comply. A sharp altercation ensued, in which Oxford commanded Sidney to leave the court, and called him a puppy, — "in which progress of heat," as Lord Brooke quaintly remarks, "as the tempest grew more and more vehement within, so did their hearts breathe out their perturbations in more loud and shrill accent." The noise of the tumult attracted the notice of the French commissioners, who were then in attendance upon the Queen, upon which Sidney demanded in a loud tone what the Earl had said. On being answered with the same offensive epithet, he gave his opponent the lie direct. At length Sidney withdrew from the tennis-court in a state of great indignation. Some hostile messages passed between the parties; but before matters had reached a crisis, the Lords of the Council interfered and referred the matter to the Queen. Her Majesty accordingly administered a sharp rebuke to Sidney, telling him that there was considerable difference in rank between earls and gentlemen; that the inferior ranks owed respect to their superiors; that princes must uphold their own creations; and that the gentlemen's neglect of the nobility set a bad example to the common people. This reproof must have galled Sidney's pride; but in respectful terms he replied, that, although Oxford was a great lord, he was not lord over him, and could claim no other homage except that of precedency. The final result was Sidney's temporary retirement from the court. His anger against Oxford had been vehement, and he was by no means ready to overlook the insult. In a letter to Sir Christopher Hatton, dated August 28th, 1579, and printed in the

second volume of Wright's "Queen Elizabeth and her Times," he says : —

"As for the matter depending between the Earl of Oxford and me, certainly, sir, however I might have forgiven him, I should never have forgiven myself if I had lain under so proud an injury as he would have laid upon me, neither can anything under the sun make me repent it, nor any misery make me go one half word back from it. Let him therefore, as he will, digest it. For my part, I think tying up makes some things seem fiercer than they would be."

Upon his withdrawal from court he repaired to Wilton, the seat of his sister, who had married the Earl of Pembroke, some years before. Here he composed the Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*, "the most celebrated romance that was ever written," says one of his early biographers. This once popular production was never completed, and was written on loose sheets of paper, most of it in his sister's presence, the rest being sent to her in sheets as fast as it was finished. His principal object, as we learn from his own admission, was to celebrate the perfections of Lady Rich; and at the end of one of the long episodes in the Second Book, he exclaims: "Alas, sweet Philoclea, how hath my pen till now forgot thy passions, since to thy memory principally all this long matter is intended!" Whether he had any ulterior aim in its preparation is extremely doubtful, — at least none is apparent. Lord Brooke indeed assures us, "that in all these creatures of his making, his intent and scope was to turn the barren philosophy-precepts into pregnant images of life." In another place the same partial friend writes: "I know his purpose was to limn out such exact pictures of every posture in the mind, that any man, being forced in the strains of this life to pass through any straits or latitudes of good or ill fortune, might, as in a glass, see how to set a good countenance upon all the discountenances of adversity, and a stay upon the exorbitant smiling of chance." But whatever may have been the hidden wisdom its early readers found in it, it attained a great popularity, which was not much diminished for several generations. Milton, indeed, pronounced it "a vain amatorious poem," and thought it was "not to be read at any time without great caution." But, with this exception, it is not



easy to find any adverse criticism upon the work before the time of Horace Walpole, who reduced its swollen reputation to very moderate dimensions, declaring that it was "a tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastoral romance, which the patience of a young virgin in love cannot now wade through."

From this judgment we cannot very widely dissent. It is true that the *Arcadia* contains many noble sentiments expressed with great beauty and force, many just reflections upon the duties of the governing classes, and not a few descriptions of exquisite grace and truthfulness. Still the impression produced upon the reader is that of insufferable weariness. Nor will it be denied that the book is disfigured by the quaint conceits, the pedantry, and the affectation which characterized much of the literature of that epoch; and that there are many passages which no gentleman would now read aloud in his family. The coarseness and indelicacy of the age have left their impression very deep on Sidney's pages. Most of the book is written in prose, but it is interspersed with songs and versified dialogues, of which it is not too harsh a criticism to say, that, with few exceptions, they are utterly worthless. It is commonly asserted that Sidney requested the manuscript should be destroyed at his death, probably from a belief that the work was unworthy of his powers. In this judgment he was certainly correct, notwithstanding the remarkable popularity which the romance long enjoyed. The weary reader who has plodded through its well-nigh interminable episodes is irresistibly led to the belief, that it was not in literary exercises that Sidney would have achieved his highest renown if his life had been protracted. Even Lord Brooke virtually admits this when he says, "They that knew him well will truly confess this *Arcadia* of his to be, both in form and matter, as much inferior to that unbounded spirit of his, as the industry and images of other men's works are many times raised above the writer's capacities," and when he further tells us, that Sidney's "end was not writing, even while he wrote, nor his knowledge moulded for tables and schools."

Sidney's self-enjoined exile from court was not of long continuance; and though he had so strongly opposed the French

marriage upon a former occasion, he did not hesitate to take part in a tourney held in honor of the commissioners sent over in 1581, by Catherine de Medici, to renew the negotiations. In this triumph, as it was called, the Earl of Arundel, Lord Windsor, Sidney, and Fulke Greville were the challengers; and the part of the tilt-yard where the Queen was seated was designated, in courtly phrase, as the Castle of Perfect Beauty. After many adulatory speeches addressed to the flattery-loving Queen, the tilting began, and was continued for two days, with much pomp and the most servile adulation of her Majesty. It is probably to this magnificent display of skill in the arena that Sidney alludes in the forty-first sonnet of *Astrophel and Stella*, in which he ascribes his success in a tilting-match to the favoring smiles of Lady Rich.

“ Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance  
Guided so well, that I obtained the prize,  
Both by the judgment of the English eyes,  
And of some sent from that sweet enemy, France;  
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance;  
Town-folks, my strength; a daintier judge applies  
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise:  
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;

“ Others, because of both sides I do take  
My blood from them who did excel in this,  
Think nature me a man of arms did make.  
How far they shot awry! the true cause is,  
Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face  
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.”

In the course of the same year, the French prince made a short visit to England for the purpose of urging his suit in person, and appears at first to have met with much encouragement. Upon his return to the Netherlands he was accompanied by a numerous train of the nobility and gentry, including the Earl of Leicester, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sidney; but soon after the Queen began to waver, and the marriage treaty was broken off.\*

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\* Francis Hercules, Duke of Alençon, and upon the accession of his brother Henry III. to the throne of France also Duke of Anjou, was small in stature, deeply marked by the small-pox, and not at all prepossessing in appearance. Yet he succeeded in exciting the Queen's interest, and when he returned to the Netherlands, in February, 1582, he had reason to regard himself as an accepted suitor.

In 1581, Sidney was chosen a member of the House of Commons for the county of Kent; but in the very meagre Parliamentary records of that age we have been unable to discover any notice of his services, except the fact that he was appointed a member of the committee to determine what measures should be brought before Parliament. There was then, however, as has been well remarked by Lord Macaulay, no regular opposition in Parliament to the measures of the Queen's government, and it is not probable that Sidney took any active part in the discussions. Parliamentary oratory dates from a later period, though even in Elizabeth's time there was some bold speaking, which served to prepare the way for Pym, Elliot, and their associates of the reign of Charles I. Under favorable circumstances Sidney would doubtless have acted a conspicuous part, and his impetuous temper would have made him a bold and frequent speaker.\*

It is to this period, as we are inclined to believe, that we must refer his amour with Lady Rich, and the composition of *Astrophel and Stella*. The lady had recently married Lord Rich, who was considerably older than his wife; but this circumstance did not prevent Sidney from addressing her in most ardent verse. It is commonly thought that his suit was unsuccessful, "though," as Mr. Hallam justly remarks, "far enough from being Platonic"; and this view is sustained by numerous passages in the sonnets. But there are other passages which seem to throw doubt upon it, and the real

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But he was soon satisfied that Elizabeth had no intention of marrying him. He died in June, 1584, at Chateau Thierry, of a rapid consumption, hastened by his debaucheries. His character has been drawn in very dark colors by almost every historian who has had occasion to refer to him. Mr. Motley, in his *Dutch Republic*, pronounces him "the most despicable personage who had ever entered the Netherlands," and expresses the opinion that "History will always retain him as an example, to show mankind the amount of mischief which may be perpetrated by a prince, ferocious without courage, ambitious without talent, and bigoted without opinions." M. Henri Martin is scarcely less severe in the *"Histoire de France."* Speaking of Anjou's death, he says: "*Personne ne regretta ce malheureux prince, aussi faux et aussi vicieux que ses frères.*"

\* Sidney sat also in the Parliament of 1584, and was a member of the committee to which was referred the bill confirming the Queen's patent to Sir Walter Raleigh for the discovery and colonization of "such remote heathen and barbarous lands, not actually possessed by any Christian prince, nor inhabited by Christian people," as he might select.

facts in the case are not easily ascertained. Some of the sonnets are of great beauty; others exhibit a lamentable laxity of moral principle; and others are full of forced conceits and pedantic phrases, breathing little of the spirit of genuine poetry. Thus, in the seventh sonnet, he enters into an elaborate discussion of the question why Stella was born with black eyes; and this sonnet may be taken as an adequate representative of a very considerable part of his poetry.

“ When Nature made her chief work, Stella’s eyes,  
In color black why wrapped she beams so bright?  
Would she, in beamy black, like painter wise,  
Frame daintiest lustre, mixed of shades and light?  
Or did she, else, that sober hue devise,  
In object best, to knit and strength our sight,  
Lest, if no veil these brave gleams did disguise,  
They, sun-like, should more dazzle than delight?

“ Or would she her mirac’lous power show,  
That, whereas black seems beauty’s contrary,  
She, even in black, doth make all beauty flow?  
Both so, and thus, she, minding Love should be  
Placed ever there, gave him this mourning weed,  
To honor all their deaths who for her bleed.” \*

Quite different from this is the twenty-seventh sonnet, which may be quoted as a favorable specimen of his more simple and unaffected manner.

“ Because I oft, in dark, abstracted guise,  
Seem most alone in greatest company;  
With dearth of words, or answers quite awry,  
To them that would make speech of speech arise;  
They deem, and of their doom the rumor flies,  
That poison foul of bubbling pride doth lie  
So in my swelling breast, that only I  
Fawn on myself, and others do despise;  
“ Yet pride, I think, doth not my soul possess,  
Which looks too oft in his unflattering glass:  
But one worse fault, ambition, I confess,  
That makes me oft my best friends overpass,

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\* In the description of Philoclea in the First Book of the *Arcadia*, Sidney indulges himself in the same extravagant conceit. Her eyes were black, he tells us, “black, indeed, whether Nature so made them, that we might be able to behold and bear their wonderful shining, or that she, goddess-like, would work this miracle with herself, in giving blackness the price above all beauty.”

Unseen, unheard, while thought to highest place  
Bends all his powers, even unto Stella's grace."

There are also many passages in the sonnets which, when separated from their context, may be read with pleasure. Among them the following lines from the thirty-ninth sonnet are especially deserving of notice.

"Come, sleep : O sleep ! the certain knot of peace,  
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,  
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,  
The indifferent judge between the high and low ;  
With shield of proof, shield me from out the prease  
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw :  
O make in me those civil wars to cease ;  
I will good tribute pay if thou do so."

But upon the whole it must be admitted that the predominant characteristics of these sonnets are quaintness and affectation ; and that their moral tone is in general very low. It is probable, however, that they were not designed for publication ; and they were not printed until 1591. At that time both Lord and Lady Rich were living ; and, as Mr. Hallam remarks, "it is rather a singular circumstance that, in her own and her husband's lifetime, this ardent courtship of a married woman should have been deemed fit for publication."

About the time that Sidney was engaged in this intrigue he wrote the *Defence of Poesy*, the most pleasing of all his productions, and one of the finest prose-writings of that age. Its style is diffuse and sometimes obscure, but for the most part forcible and harmonious ; and the book exhibits throughout that wealth of learning which was one of Sidney's most noticeable characteristics. Opening with a reminiscence of his residence at Vienna, he next proceeds to show the antiquity of poetry, to indicate its different kinds, and to prove the superiority of the poet over moral philosophers and historians ; "for he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it." The poet, he further tells us, "beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness, but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion,

either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchancing skill of music ; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner." From this introductory discussion Sidney passes to a special defence of the different kinds of poetry, and answers severally the objections which he supposes will be urged against poets and poetry. In conclusion he speaks of the contemporary English literature, especially the drama, and ends with a brief and pointed address, conjuring all who "have had the ill-luck to read this ink-wasting toy of mine, even in the name of the nine Muses, no more to scorn the sacred mysteries of poesy ; no more to laugh at the name of poets, as though they were next inheritors to fools."

Not long after this, Sidney married, much to the Queen's dissatisfaction, the only surviving daughter of his old protector, Sir Francis Walsingham. Of his married life, which was of brief duration, we know very little. Spenser, indeed, tells us that Stella was the only woman whom he really loved ; and this is very likely to be true. After his death his widow was twice married, — first to the unfortunate Earl of Essex, Lady Rich's brother, and subsequently to the Earl of Clan-Ricard. But whatever may have been the relations between Sidney and his fair young wife, he seems to have been regarded with more than ordinary affection by his father-in-law. The letters which passed between them were frank and manly ; and Walsingham frequently alludes to him in his correspondence with others. To his father-in-law he was probably indebted for assistance in the pecuniary difficulties by which he was several times embarrassed, and for other kindly offices.

In January, 1583, he was knighted at Windsor by the Queen, although the year before she had refused his petition to be joined with his uncle, the Earl of Warwick, in the charge of the ordnance. A year or two later he undertook the defence of another of his uncles, the Earl of Leicester, who had been bitterly assailed by the Jesuit Parsons, in a notorious libel, printed in Flanders in 1584, and commonly designated in England at the time as "Father Parsons's Green Coat," but since known as "Leicester's Common-

wealth." In this virulent pamphlet all the current stories to the disparagement of Leicester were unsparingly rehearsed, and he was accused of a long catalogue of hateful and dastardly crimes. With characteristic impetuosity Sidney hastened to draw up a reply, the temper of which is well shown by a single passage near the close, where, referring to his adversary's assertion that the Dudleys were not of noble origin, he writes: "But to thee, I say, thou therein liest in thy throat; which I will be ready to justify upon thee, in any place of Europe, where thou wilt assign me a free place of coming, as, within three months after the publishing hereof, I may understand thy mind." Certainly there was no want of spirit in the reply; but there was a singular want of argument. Upon only one point—that in regard to the nobility of the Dudleys, from whom he boasted that he was descended—was it in any degree satisfactory; and most of the charges were left unanswered. It was probably to his own perception of its weakness, or to the request of his uncle, that its suppression was owing; and it was printed for the first time about the middle of the last century.

Hitherto his life had been passed almost entirely in study and lettered ease, or in attendance upon the court; but his active and ambitious spirit sought a larger scope for the exercise of his various accomplishments. He had attained his thirtieth year, and, with the exception of his embassy to Germany, he had held no important commission in the Queen's service. Doubtless he felt capable of much greater things, and fretted for a fitting occasion to serve his country in the field or in the council-chamber. It was while his mind was in this restless and unsatisfied state, that his attention was directed to the New World, which then filled so large a place in the minds of all men. Inspired by the reports brought home by successive navigators, and eager for adventure, he at once planned an expedition to America, in connection with Sir Francis Drake. The preparations were made as quietly as possible, and it was not until he was informed the fleet was ready to sail that he went down to Plymouth, the appointed place of departure. In this journey he was accompanied by Lord Brooke. Upon their arrival they found the

preparation; by no means so far advanced as they had been led to believe; and Lord Brooke seems at once to have conceived a suspicion that Drake was playing them false. This suspicion he communicated to Sidney one night after they had retired to their chamber. At first Sidney was inclined to discredit it; but afterward he yielded his unwilling assent to the arguments advanced by Lord Brooke, and to those which his own observation furnished him. How far this distrust of his associate was well founded cannot be determined; but it is certain that the Queen obtained some information in regard to the proposed expedition, and resolved to prevent Sidney's departure, though for what reason does not appear. The first messenger sent for this purpose was stopped on the way by two soldiers in disguise, acting under Sidney's direction, and the letters of recall, of which he was the bearer, were forcibly taken from him. A second messenger was then sent down to Plymouth with peremptory orders for Sidney to desist from his proposed expedition, under penalty of the Queen's severe displeasure. He was thus reluctantly compelled to give up his hope of winning renown in America. But, as Lord Brooke observes, "from the ashes of this first propounded voyage to America, that fatal Low Country action sprang up, in which this worthy gentleman lost his life."

Upon the assassination of the Prince of Orange, Elizabeth determined to succor the Protestants of the Netherlands, in their long-protracted struggle with the Spanish monarchy. A treaty was accordingly concluded in July, 1585, by which England agreed to furnish an army of six thousand men, and the revolted Provinces ceded the possession of certain towns and the strong fort of Rammekins, as security for the proper performance of the stipulations entered into on their part. Leicester was appointed commander-in-chief; and Sidney was named Governor of Flushing and of Rammekins, and was also made a general of horse. Lord Brooke has given a most interesting account of the policy which Sidney favored in the conduct of the war, but it is a little singular that this important passage has apparently escaped the notice of subsequent biographers. According to Lord Brooke's statement, Sidney weighed the matter with a calmness and sobriety of



judgment which justify the high estimate of his powers formed several years before by William the Silent. "To carry war into the bowels of Spain," we are told, "and, by the assistance of the Netherlands, burn his shipping in all havens, as they passed along, — and in that passage, surprise some well-chosen place for strength and wealth, easy to be taken, and possible to be kept by us, — he supposed to be the safest, most quick, and honorable counsel of diversion." But as this view did not fall in with the Queen's plan of operations, he entered zealously into the execution of her designs; and his letters from the Netherlands show with what patient fidelity and untiring energy he labored.

On the 18th of November, 1585, he landed in the Low Countries, and proceeded at once to enter upon the duties intrusted to him. It was not until the following June, however, that he appears to have been engaged in any important enterprise. In that month he surprised and captured, without the loss of a single man, Axel, a maritime town in Zealand, not far from Flushing. His next important undertaking was an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the enemy from throwing supplies into Zutphen, which was then besieged by the English army, under Leicester. On the evening of the 21st of September, a portion of these supplies was conveyed into the town; but as the work was not completed, it was determined to continue operations the next day. The morning was thick and foggy, so that even near objects could be but dimly discerned, when a considerable body of the Spanish troops was suddenly encountered by a smaller body of English under Sidney and Sir John Norris, at the village of Warnsfeld, about half a mile from Zutphen. A fierce battle immediately began, which was still further aggravated by the inability of the combatants to distinguish between friends and foes. Sidney, as might have been anticipated, was among the foremost in the fight, and had two horses shot under him. At length he received a musket-shot just above the left knee, which "so brake and rifted the bone, and so entered the thigh upward, as the bullet could not be found before the body was opened."

As he was retiring from the field, faint with loss of blood,

but still preserving the entire command of his faculties, an incident occurred which in the minds of most readers is more intimately connected with his name than any other circumstance in his life. Feeling a thirst natural to his condition, he called for water, which was brought to him as soon as possible. But just as he was putting the bottle to his mouth, a dying soldier was borne along, who cast an eager glance at the grateful draught. Sidney saw it; and with heroic self-denial he took the bottle from his mouth, and handed it to the soldier, saying, "Thy necessity is greater than mine." Certainly no finer instance of self-sacrifice is recorded in history, and there is nothing in Sidney's life which better illustrates the real beauty of his character.

From the field of battle he was conveyed in the Earl of Leicester's barge to Arnheim, where he received the most careful attention from the surgeons, from his wife, who had come over to Holland to be with him, and from numerous devoted friends. At first it was not thought that his wound would prove fatal; but unfavorable symptoms soon appeared, and it was found impossible to extract the bullet. Sidney felt that his end was approaching, and he prepared for it with Christian resignation. A minute and tedious account of his last days was drawn up by his chaplain,—supposed to have been Mr. George Gifford, a noted preacher of that age,—which is printed at length by Dr. Zouch. During his illness Sidney suffered much, so that, as Lord Brooke tells us, his shoulder-bones wore through the skin; but he bore his sufferings without complaint, and, according to the same writer, "he called the ministers unto him, who were all excellent men, of divers nations, and before them made such a confession of Christian faith, as no book but the heart can truly and feelingly deliver." From Mr. Gifford's account, we learn that he was at first much troubled in regard to his sins, the near approach of death, and a fear of the future judgment; but these apprehensions were at length dispelled, and "with great cheerfulness he did often lift up his eyes and hands, giving thanks to God that he did chastise him with a loving and fatherly coercion, and to his singular profit whether the soul live or die." In this condition he lingered for several days,

conversing much on religious topics, and indicating a wish that his friends should continue to address him when he could no longer answer. On the 17th of October he breathed his last, in the arms of his friend and private secretary, William Temple, who had relinquished a life of study that he might follow Sidney to Holland, and who had been his devoted attendant through all his sufferings.

His death caused a profound and universal grief both in England and in Holland. The United Provinces sought earnestly to have his body interred at their expense, and to erect a costly monument to his memory; but the honor was declined. His remains were immediately carried to Flushing, and thence conveyed in a ship, draped in black and with black sails, to the Tower Wharf in London, where they were landed early in November. They then lay in state in the Minories without Aldgate until the 16th of February, when the funeral was celebrated with unusual magnificence in St. Paul's Cathedral. The procession was headed by thirty-two poor men, to indicate his age; and the pall was borne by the Earls of Huntingdon, Leicester, Essex, and Pembroke, and Lords Willoughby and North. A great train of mourners followed, among whom were seven representatives of the seven United Provinces, dressed in black, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, on horseback and arrayed in their official robes, and the Company of Grocers in their livery. A tablet bearing an inscription adapted from a French epigram on the *Sieur de Bonnivet* was hung in the choir; but no monument now marks Sidney's resting-place or enshrines his memory.

In attempting to form an estimate of Sidney's character, and to ascertain the justness of his claims to the position assigned to him by his contemporaries, it must be conceded that his writings do not furnish an adequate expression of his powers. It is evident not only from the testimony of those who knew him best, but also from the ability which he exhibited in his mission to the imperial court and upon some other occasions, that he possessed an intellect more capacious and far-reaching than would be inferred merely from reading the *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* and his poems. All of his

works were written before he was thirty years old, and before his powers had fully ripened. They have therefore the faults naturally to be looked for in the productions of a young man. But in addition to this, Sidney's nature was singularly impulsive, and the warmth of his feelings tended to aggravate these peculiar faults. If he had lived to riper years, and had revised his early productions, it cannot be doubted that he would have introduced many changes affecting both their form and their substance, and would have made them far more worthy of his reputation. Probably he would have outgrown to a considerable degree those faults of his age which may be traced so readily in his writings, and which a more mature taste would have rejected. With advancing years the hot passions of youth would have cooled, and he would have breathed a less fiery spirit into his works.

Statesmanship, however, appears to have been the department of intellectual effort in which he would probably have won the highest renown. He was too rash and impulsive to be a successful soldier. But we cannot doubt that he would easily and quickly have grown into a great statesman, if he had had the requisite training and a fitting opportunity for the trial of his capacity. With the exception, however, of the embassy to Germany, upon which he set out before he was twenty-two years old, and his letter in regard to the Queen's marriage, he never had an opportunity of showing his ability in the management of public affairs. His own opinion was that the Queen was unwilling to give him employment, and that she was disposed to find fault with him whenever there was a chance to do so; but this was only the petulant expression of disappointed ambition. It cannot be doubted that Elizabeth would have raised him to high office if his death had not disappointed every anticipation; and we entertain scarcely less doubt that he would have performed the duties assigned to him in a manner creditable to himself and useful to his country. As it is, to quote the words of the elder D'Israeli, "His fame was more mature than his life, which indeed was but the preparation of a splendid one."

The most obvious defect in his character, and the source of many errors, was his impetuosity. Yet he was a trusty

and devoted friend, and drew others to him by an irresistible attraction. Languet, Fulke Greville, Spenser, William the Silent, and many of the most renowned of his contemporaries, were his personal friends. According to the measure of his ability he was a generous patron of literature; and many works were inscribed to him by needy authors. It is not improbable, therefore, that the disordered state of his pecuniary affairs was in part owing to his patronage of learned men.\* Spenser, in particular, is said to have received pecuniary gifts from Sidney, and to have passed some time with him at Penshurst, where, according to some commentators, "The Shepherd's Calendar" was written; but this statement is denied by other writers. It is certain, however, that Spenser was indebted to Sidney for his introduction to the Earl of Leicester; and there is but little doubt that he also received other favors from his accomplished and powerful friend. These two characteristics of Sidney, the impetuosity of his temper and the strength of his affections, were often strikingly illustrated in the same act; as in his defence of his father's administration in Ireland, and in his defence of Leicester. In the one case, affection for his father, and in the other regard for his uncle, led him to espouse the cause with warmth, and in both cases his ardor carried him far beyond the limits of a proper discretion.

His personal courage was undoubted; and in his quarrel with the Earl of Oxford, he was clearly right in regard to the question at issue, though even here he seems to have lost the command of his temper, and to have used language unbecoming a gentleman. Under the circumstances, it was natural that he should feel indignant, and express himself with warmth; but he can scarcely be justified for indulging in a violent personal altercation at such a time and in so public a place. In his subsequent conduct he seems to have acted with spirit and judgment; and his reply to Elizabeth, when

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\* It is well known that Sidney left a considerable amount of debts at his decease, for which he endeavored to make provision by his last will. From his own letters, we learn that as early as 1581 his necessities were very great, and at that time he had recourse to his friends, in the hope that they might induce Elizabeth to grant him some pecuniary gift.

she reproved him for the part he had taken, was dignified and manly. Nor can his withdrawal from court in consequence of her reprimand be regarded as a mere outburst of petulant resentment. His course throughout the affair, we may add, furnishes a striking illustration of the high principles of honor by which he was uniformly governed. In this case he was the aggrieved party, and such appears to have been the relation which he occupied in all his personal difficulties. He had too keen a sense of honor and justice to encroach upon the rights of others. But he was at all times tenacious of his own rights and of the honor of his family; and he was ready to defend both with his pen or his sword. Proud of his ancestry, and with much of the spirit of a knight-errant of the Middle Age, he regarded an imputation upon those whose blood flowed in his veins as a personal insult, and resented it as such.

The darkest blot upon his fame is his amour with Lady Rich. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of his biographers should have suppressed all allusion to it, and that others should have passed lightly over the subject. But the facts are too manifest to be concealed, and no sophistry can essentially modify their character. It may indeed be urged, in extenuation of his conduct, that the moral sense of the age was not very delicate, and that he does not appear to have suffered in the estimation of his contemporaries. The force of this argument will be freely admitted by all who are familiar with the social condition of England in the Elizabethan Age. Still it does not reach the heart of the matter, and it is but a poor excuse for such a man as Sidney, to say that he was no worse than were many of the most illustrious of his contemporaries. He ought to have been much better; for in other respects his principles were pure and lofty. In yielding to his passionate regard for Stella, he sank to the level of the courtly throng by whom he was surrounded, and to whom he was in everything else immensely superior.